Reflexives: -self vs. zi4/zi4ji3

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Corpus used: English – Chinese Parallel Concordancer (E-C Concord)
E-C Concord Website: http://corpus.eduhk.hk/paraconc/

Reflexives (-self) are frequently used in English. There are many interesting ways that one can use them, for example:

(1) She said to herself
(2) She thought to herself

You can say something to yourself, and you can say something to someone else.
You can think to yourself, but you cannot think to someone else.

(3) She kept fanning herself.
(4) He measured himself.
(5) They saved themselves.

The reflexive words in Examples 3, 4 and 5 are genuine objects, and they are not movable, otherwise the meaning will change: She kept fanning herself ≠ She herself kept fanning.

(6) She must have a prize herself
(7) She herself had no idea

The reflexive words in Examples 6 and 7 are used to intensify the subjects, and they are movable: She must have a prize herself = She herself must have a prize.

The Chinese equivalent to -self is 自 or 自己 (自 is a shortened form of 自己).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study the following examples carefully, and see how the English reflexives are translated into Chinese. Try to find out rules underlining the translation.</th>
<th>仔細分析以下例子，看看英文中的反身代詞是如何被翻譯成中文的。找出翻譯規則。</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. she said to herself as she ran</td>
<td>她一边跑一边自言自語 3sg while run while self say self say</td>
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<td>2. said anxiously to herself</td>
<td>焦急地對自己說道 anxiously towards self say say</td>
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<td>3. muttering to himself as he came</td>
<td>邊走邊自言自語 bian1 zou3 bian1 zi4 yan2 zi4 yu3 while walk while self say self say</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. she heard it muttering to itself</td>
<td>她聽見它喃喃自語 3sg hear 3sg (sound) self say</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. she thought to herself</td>
<td>她暗自想 3sg dark self think</td>
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</table>
6. she went on planning to herself
   接下來 她 盤算著

7. You ought to be ashamed of yourself
   你 應當 感到 羞愧

8. she kept fanning herself
   她 不斷地 扇著

9. children that were of the same age as herself
   與 她 同齡的 小孩

10. always ready to make herself useful
    生性 樂於 助人

11. Explain yourself
    把 話 講 清楚

12. she drew herself up
    她 挺直 身子

13. shook itself
    抖動 一下 身子

14. write a self-criticism
    写 檢 討

15. He was sunning himself
    他 在 曬 太陽

16. Don’t wear yourself out
    也 別 累著

17. with only death itself setting a limit
    只有 死亡 才是一個 界限

18. My cold had cured itself
    我的 感冒 不治自愈

19. I’m supporting myself now as a farm-hand
    我 現在 是 自食其力的 勞動者

Question: How many times was ‘-self’ translated into ‘自’ or ‘自己’? What advice can we give to our students regarding the use of ‘-self’ in English?
Quiz:

Please choose the more appropriate Chinese translation of the following English sentences:

O: Mrs. Bennet deigned not to make any reply; but unable to contain herself, began scolding one of her daughters.
- 班納特太太沒有理睬他，可是忍不住自己的氣，便罵起女兒來。
- 班納特太太沒有理睬他，可是忍不住氣，便罵起女兒來。

O: Titty was thinking of the island itself, of coral, treasure and footprints in the sand.
- 悸悌想著小島上的每個細節 -- 珊瑚、寶藏和沙灘上的足印。
- 悌悌想著小島上的每個細節 -- 珊瑚、寶藏和沙灘上的足印。